

in the election of the President. The international community has spoken, and we expect Syria to honor those—that demand.

Sa'ad Hariri suffered incredible tragedy when his good father was assassinated, killed in Lebanon. And as a result of that cold-blooded murder, the international community has demanded accountability. That tribunal is taking too long to get started. The international community must work more quickly to stand up this tribunal so people will be held to account. And not only that, this tribunal will send a clear message that there will be justice delivered for not only the murder of your dad but for the murder of others that have taken place on the streets of Beirut.

You know, I admire your courage. This is a tough time.

Mr. Hariri. Thank you.

President Bush. And I appreciate the fact that you care enough about the people of Lebanon that you're willing to work hard for peace and democracy and freedom. And I reiterate what I told you, is that the United States is more than just an admirer; we want to help you as best as we possibly can.

So I welcome you here to the Oval Office.

Mr. Hariri. Thank you. I thank you, Mr. President, for the political and all the support that you have given Lebanon, from the international tribunal, from helping the security forces also, and fighting those terrorists in Lebanon. Also, we in Lebanon have a very important constitutional Presidential election that we don't want any foreign interference in this Presidential election.

We've had Members of our Parliament being killed. We ask—I ask Mr. President that this action is taken by terrorists that want to finish our democracy. We will stay resolved; we will stay focused on our democracy. We will not let those who want to destroy our democracy succeed. We have paid very dear blood, from my father to Mr. Antoine Ghanem lately, who were willing to pay the price to preserve our democracy. And we shall preserve our democracy with our country.

Thank you, Mr. President.

President Bush. Welcome. Glad you're here. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:01 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Fuad Siniora of Lebanon; Adm. William J. Fallon, commander, U.S. Central Command; and former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri of Lebanon, who was assassinated on February 14, 2005. Mr. Hariri referred to Parliament Member Antoine Ghanem of Lebanon, who was assassinated on September 19.

Statement on Senator Pete V. Domenici's Decision Not To Seek Reelection

October 4, 2007

For over three decades, the citizens of New Mexico have turned to Pete Domenici for leadership on issues that matter to their families, their communities, and their country. He earned the respect and trust of his constituents, which is why they elected him to serve in the United States Senate longer than any other New Mexican in history.

A proud son of Italian immigrants, Pete has devoted much of his life to serving the State and the country that he loves. In Washington, he has won the respect of his peers as a skilled and determined legislator. He championed clean nuclear power and helped secure the passage of the Energy Policy Act of 2005, the first national energy plan in more than a decade. As chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, he was a leader in efforts to lower taxes, balance the budget, and reduce Washington spending. And he has been a tireless advocate for our men and women in uniform. Senator Domenici has helped improve the lives of millions of Americans and made our country safer.

Pete is a man of intellect and compassion. I have valued his counsel and friendship, and I look forward to working with him as he serves out the remainder of his term.

Laura and I are grateful for Pete's service to our Nation. As he nears retirement, we pray for his health and well-being, and we send Pete, his wife Nancy, and their family our best wishes.

Statement on House of Representatives Passage of Mortgage Forgiveness Debt Relief Legislation

October 4, 2007

In August, I proposed a comprehensive plan to help homeowners avoid foreclosures and stay in their homes. As part of this plan, I pledged to work with Congress in a bipartisan way to temporarily reform a provision of the Federal Tax Code to make it easier for homeowners to refinance their mortgages during this time of market stress. Today a bipartisan majority of the House of Representatives passed legislation to help people stay in their homes and move this process forward. I applaud the House's efforts. I urge the Senate to swiftly consider this legislation and make it temporary.

NOTE: The statement referred to H.R. 3648.

Proclamation 8185—German-American Day, 2007

October 4, 2007

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Generations of German Americans have helped shape our national culture and advance our legacy of freedom. On German-American Day, we recognize the many contributions that Americans of German descent have made to our vibrant country.

German immigrants, in search of a brighter future, were among the first pioneers to settle in Jamestown. Since then, German Americans have influenced our society in all walks of life and helped expand our democratic heritage and our deeply held belief in individual liberty. The leadership and strong spirit of German Americans have helped shape our country and advance the great blessings of our Nation.

German-American Day is also an opportunity to honor the strong ties between the United States and Germany and to celebrate our friendship. On this day, we underscore our commitment to working together to pro-

mote peace and making the world a more hopeful place.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim October 6, 2007, as German-American Day. I encourage all Americans to celebrate the many contributions German Americans have made to our Nation's liberty and prosperity.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this fourth day of October, in the year of our Lord two thousand seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-second.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:55 a.m., October 5, 2007]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on October 9.

Proclamation 8186—Columbus Day, 2007

October 4, 2007

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

In 1492, Christopher Columbus set sail on a journey that changed the course of history. On Columbus Day, we celebrate this voyage of discovery and honor an Italian explorer who shaped the destiny of the New World.

Christopher Columbus' bold journey across the Atlantic opened new frontiers of exploration and demonstrated the power of perseverance. His journeys inspired other risk-takers and dreamers to test the bounds of their imagination and gave them the courage to accomplish great feats, whether crossing the world's oceans or walking on the moon. Today, a new generation of innovators and pioneers continues to uphold the finest values of our country—discipline, ingenuity, and unity in the pursuit of great goals.

As we look back on the contributions of the great explorer from Genoa, we also celebrate the many contributions that generations of Italian Americans have made to our